Giles Corey

By Maxwell

1. Giles Corey is an old but grumpy farmer who lives in Salem. He has been sued eight times in year the play is set, as shown by the quote “I have been six time in court this year” to which John Proctor replies “Is it the devils fault that a man can’t say you good morning without you clap him for defamation?”. He also isn’t very bright, as he asks judge if reading books is odd for a woman (his wife) and claims that he couldn’t pray whilst she read. He is also stubborn as his last two words, uttered whilst being crushed by stones are; “More weight…”.
2. Giles’ true personality is shown during act three, at the courthouse. It is shown because before he has been stubborn and almost the typical grumpy old man but now he has a task; his wife is denying witchcraft which will more than likely result in her death and Giles is trying in vain to save her from death. This is shown by Giles claiming to have proof that Putnam is grabbing land by killing off people, claiming they are witches. It’s important because Putnam is also a very prominent member of the church, almost a celebrity (if infamous) and having a small farmer going up against him shows that either Giles is courageous or not very aware of the full situation. Or both.
3. ‘I am never put-upon; I know my rights, sir, and I will have them. You know, your father tried a case of mine - might be thirty-five year ago, I think.’ This is showing that Giles has a history in the court, and also has a good memory.

‘This is a hearing. You cannot arrest me for contempt of a hearing!’ This also shows Giles’ knowledge about how the court works but also serves as his condemnation; after saying this judge Hawthorne starts the court in session, making it so that Giles can be arrest and charged with contempt.

‘I will not give you no name. I mentioned my wife’s name once and I’ll burn in hell long enough for that. I stand mute.’ This is an important quote because it shows that him getting his wife locked up for reading books has made him felt guilty and as such refuses to give names in fear of them being punished. It links a previous event to the near climax bringing meaning to why Giles brought it up (and why Miller included the scene to begin with).

‘I’ll cut your throat, Putnam, I’ll kill you yet!’ This is an important quote in that it shows Giles’ contempt and hatred for Putnam in an unsubtle, raw and uncensored form. Giles believes that Putnam is using the witchhunt and executions as a way to grab more land and power.

‘Say nothin’ more John (*Pointing at Danforth*) He’s only playin’ you! He means to hang us all!’ This is after Giles has been arrest for contempt of the court and shows how he is frustrated at not only the court but himself. His experiencing in law also makes his statement more legitimate, but the doubt of the spur of the moment may have been the cause of Giles announcing this.

1. Giles’ main friend (so to say) is John Proctor. Giles has done some work for John and during the courthouse scene tries to defend John (as shown through the last quote). But the two are not in total harmony as John in act one criticizes Giles’ habit to sue people for mild things. This quasi-friendship helps with the feeling of defeat over John when Giles dies. His death, with John being charged with witchcraft, makes it seem like John has nowhere left to run (or enforces the feeling) and that his life has been broken and tarnished from what it was.
2. The most important thing about Giles is that he is not selfish (sort of). Giles thinks that he is the cause for his wife’s charging of witchcraft and because of this he goes incredibly out of his way to save her, even dying because he refuses to give a name in fear that person will go to jail.
3. In 1947, 43 people were put on a blacklist because they were suspected of being communists or having communist ties. This came out of the paranoia and ‘Red Scare’ over the sudden dominance of the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and their nuclear armament. Of the 43 people placed on the list most were screenwriters but also included actors, directors, producers and other roles. 19 of these people refused to give evidence and were charged with **contempt** of congress. Giles Corey was charged and ultimately executed over a contempt charge when he refused to give the name of the person who gave the tip-off that Putnam may be using the witch-trials as a means for him to gain more land.